4: Cross L-5 (no date) 1948 E16 Slavs E16

Russian poets with more form than talent now began to celebrate official occasions and generous donors with ponderous odes. Handbooks of French pseudoclassic literary theory, like Boileau's *Art Poétique*, were translated and annotated. The Academy of Sciences, founded by Peter's widow in 1725, included not only imported German luminaries, but the first Russian natural scientist Michael Lomonosov, sometimes characterized as the Russian Franklin, but whom, on account of the universality of his talent, Pushkin, greatest of Russian poets, called "Russia's first university." He is also notable as the first proletarian in secular Russian letters, for he started his career as a poor fisherman's son far north on the White Sea. The first modern Russian history was composed during the reigns of Anna and Elizabeth by Basil Tatishchev, a former collaborator of Peter the Great. The purely intellectual progress in the thirty years after Peter's death was thus considerable, even though (with rare exceptions) it was confined to the aristocracy.

It is a matter of record that when Catherine II came to the throne in 1762 she was already familiar with the theories of the eighteenth-century French political philosophers and would have welcomed an opportunity to apply them. But her position had been won wholly by the aid of the landed gentry and the aristocratic guard regiments, who were unlikely to surrender any of their prerogatives or to consent to any mitigation of the institution of serfdom on which their economic existence was based. The great empress thus contributed little to social progress, and her educational innovations remained for the most part on paper. Yet through her interest in the satirical journal and in the drama, she stimulated the progress of Russian letters even if her social initiatives were weak. In that field others carried the torch. A Russian customs official, Alexander Radishchev, who had studied at Leipzig and digested the liberal philosophy of the day, in 1780 fired the opening gun against serfdom, and though the exploit sent him to Siberia, its echoes did not die away until the institution was abolished. At the same time, the spirit of social service inspired

6: Mousset H-4 (no date) 1950 E16 Slavic Peoples E16

movement in favour of a Green International of Slavonic Peasants yet merits a place in the chronology of inter-Slav relations. 186* 668

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At the same period (June 4–8, 1924) a Congress of Slav Geographers and Ethnologists was held in Prague. This too, awakened aspirations, either latent or at least dormant since the era of the great assemblies of the nineteenth century. The very choice of Prague was a reminder that Bohemia had been the 'laboratory' of the Slavonic idea. And it was the occasion of a spectacular return of Bulgaria into the community of peoples inspired by that idea. 186 815

But, when the totalitarian States had proclaimed their intention of attacking the 1919–1920 treaties, it was once more to Russia that all these peoples turned. From Moscow alone could come the watchword capable of rallying their energies—on condition that it should not look like an appeal to a Proletarian Dictatorship. 186* 829

Just as the exaltation of Teutonism, in the first half of the nineteenth century, had had as a reaction the awakening of the Slav conscience, so the National-Socialist drive, a century later, was to bring in its wake a defensive reaction tending to align, if not to regroup, the Slavonic forces.

The essentially anti-Marxist notion of race had been repudiated by Lenin. In internal affairs, it could not but hinder the work of 'mixing' undertaken by the Moscow government. In foreign affairs it had no *raison d'être,* so long as Russian diplomacy practised a Eurasiatic policy, and guided the country's destinies towards the East. But, after fifteen years, the problem of the allogeneous inhabitants had passed the crisis. The Soviet régime was firmly established. German imperialism obliged them to turn their attention towards the West: the repetition of the recurrent drama of which Europe had been the theatre since the era of Wilhelm II once more reminded the Russian world of its destiny.

The first check to Hitlerian arrogance on the part of the Kremlin was the signing in London, on July 2, 3, and 4, 1933, of agreements for the common acceptance of the definition of the aggressor, as formulated by Nicholas Politis. The U.S.S.R. signature appears at the foot of this document, side by side with 186* 648 829